

What is Claimed is:

1. An interactive television program guide system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented on user television equipment of a user, comprising:

means for providing program listings to the interactive television program guide, wherein at least some of the program listings contain potentially objectionable material; and

means for blocking the potentially objectionable material in the program listings using the interactive television program guide.

2. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the means for blocking further comprises means for replacing the potentially objectionable material in the program listings with unobjectionable material using the interactive television program guide so that when the interactive television program guide displays the program listings the unobjectionable material is displayed in place of the potentially objectionable material.

3. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material includes adult program titles and wherein the means for blocking further comprises means for replacing the adult program titles in the program listings with unobjectionable material using the interactive television program guide so that when the interactive television program guide displays the

program listings the unobjectionable material is displayed in place of the adult program titles.

4. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material includes adult program descriptions and wherein the means for blocking further comprises means for replacing the adult program descriptions in the program listings with unobjectionable material using the interactive television program guide so that when the interactive television program guide displays the program listings the unobjectionable material is displayed in place of the adult program descriptions.

5. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material includes adult program titles and descriptions and wherein the means for blocking further comprises means for replacing the adult program titles and descriptions in the program listings with unobjectionable material using the interactive television program guide so that when the interactive television program guide displays the program listings the unobjectionable material is displayed in place of the adult program titles and descriptions.

6. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for providing the user with an opportunity using the

interactive television program guide to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide.

7. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising means for identifying which of the program listings contain the potentially objectionable material.

8. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 further comprising means in the interactive television program guide for identifying which of the program listings contain the potentially objectionable material.

9. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program titles, the system further comprising means for replacing the adult program titles with generic unobjectionable titles using the interactive television program guide.

10. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program descriptions, the system further comprising means for replacing the adult program descriptions with generic unobjectionable descriptions using the interactive television program guide.

11. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially

objectionable material comprises adult program titles, the system further comprising means for replacing the adult program titles by displaying an empty region in place of the adult program titles using the interactive television program guide.

12. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program descriptions, the system further comprising means for replacing the adult program descriptions by displaying an empty region in place of the adult program descriptions using the interactive television program guide.

13. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program titles, the system further comprising:

means for identifying which channels the adult program titles are associated with; and

means for replacing the adult program titles with unobjectionable channel-related information on the channels with which the adult program titles are associated using the interactive television program guide.

14. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for identifying which of the program listings are adult

program listings based on rating information in the program listings.

15. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings based on keyword information in the program listings.

16. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings based on channel information in the program listings.

17. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the program listings are distributed to the user television equipment from a main facility and wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings at the main facility.

18. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for

identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings at the user television equipment.

19. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for providing a set-up menu with the interactive television program guide in which the user may invoke adult program listing blocking to block the display of the adult program listings by the interactive television program guide.

20. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for providing the user with an opportunity to invoke different levels of adult program listing blocking to block different amounts of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide based on ratings information associated with the adult program listings.

21. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the program listings are provided to the user television equipment with a television distribution facility having an operator and wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising means for providing the operator with an

opportunity to block the adult program listings for that operator's customers.

22. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings and wherein the program listings are provided to the user television equipment by a television distribution facility with which the user television equipment is associated, the television distribution facility having an operator, the system further comprising:

means for providing the operator with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide for the users of the user television equipment associated with the television distribution equipment; and

means for distributing complete program listings with the television distribution facility to the user television equipment associated with the television distribution facility when the operator does not invoke blocking.

23. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings and wherein the program listings are provided to the user television equipment by a television distribution facility with which the user television equipment is associated, the television distribution facility having an operator, the system further comprising:

means for providing the operator with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide for the users of the user television equipment associated with the television distribution equipment; and

means for distributing program listings with the television distribution facility to the user television equipment associated with the television distribution facility in which adult program listings have been blocked when the operator invokes blocking.

24. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings and wherein the program listings are provided to the user television equipment by a television distribution facility with which the user television equipment is associated, the television distribution facility having an operator, the system further comprising:

means for providing the operator with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide for the users of the user television equipment associated with the television distribution equipment; and

means for sending a blocking command from the television distribution facility to the user television equipment associated with the television distribution facility that directs the user television equipment to block the adult program listings when the operator invokes blocking.

25. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings containing adult time blocks of adult programming, each adult time block being associated with a channel and including multiple adult program titles, the system further comprising means for replacing the multiple adult titles in each adult time block with an unobjectionable title adult time block using the interactive television program guide.

26. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings including adult program descriptions, the system further comprising means for controlling access of the user to the adult program descriptions with the interactive television program guide.

27. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings including adult program descriptions, the system further comprising means for providing the user with an opportunity to access the adult program descriptions by entering a parental control code in the interactive television program guide.

28. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially

objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising:

means for providing an adult programming screen containing adult programming listings; and

means for blocking access to the adult programming screen with the interactive television program guide when the potentially objectionable material is blocked.

29. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising:

means for providing an adult programming screen containing adult programming listings;

means for blocking access to the adult programming screen with the interactive television program guide when the potentially objectionable material is blocked; and

means for providing access to the blocked adult programming screen with the program guide by providing the user with an opportunity to enter a parental control code.

30. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the interactive television program guide has a set reminders feature and wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising:

means for providing the user with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program

listings with the interactive television program guide;
and

means for blocking user access to the
set reminders feature for adult programs when the user
invokes blocking of the adult program listings.

31. The interactive television program guide
system defined in claim 1 wherein the interactive
television program guide has a program recording
feature and wherein the potentially objectionable
material comprises adult program listings, the system
further comprising:

means for providing the user with an
opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program
listings with the interactive television program guide;
and

means for blocking user access to the
program recording feature for adult programs when the
user invokes blocking of the adult program listings.

32. The interactive television program guide
system defined in claim 1 wherein the interactive
television program guide has a favorites profile
feature and wherein the potentially objectionable
material comprises adult program listings, the system
further comprising:

means for providing the user with an
opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program
listings with the interactive television program guide;
and

means for blocking user access to the
favorites profile feature for adult programs and

channels when the user invokes blocking of the adult program listings.

33. The interactive television program guide system defined in claim 1 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the system further comprising:

means for providing the user with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide; and

means for temporarily unblocking the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide.

34. A method for using an interactive television program guide system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented on user television equipment of a user, comprising:

providing program listings to the interactive television program guide, wherein at least some of the program listings contain potentially objectionable material; and

blocking the potentially objectionable material in the program listings using the interactive television program guide.

35. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the step of blocking further comprises replacing the potentially objectionable material in the program listings with unobjectionable material using the interactive television program guide so that when the

interactive television program guide displays the program listings the unobjectionable material is displayed in place of the potentially objectionable material.

36. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material includes adult program titles and wherein the step of blocking further comprises replacing the adult program titles in the program listings with unobjectionable material using the interactive television program guide so that when the interactive television program guide displays the program listings the unobjectionable material is displayed in place of the adult program titles.

37. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material includes adult program descriptions and wherein the step of blocking further comprises replacing the adult program descriptions in the program listings with unobjectionable material using the interactive television program guide so that when the interactive television program guide displays the program listings the unobjectionable material is displayed in place of the adult program descriptions.

38. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material includes adult program titles and descriptions and wherein the step of blocking further comprises replacing the adult program titles and descriptions in the program listings with unobjectionable material using the interactive

television program guide so that when the interactive television program guide displays the program listings the unobjectionable material is displayed in place of the adult program titles and descriptions.

39. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising providing the user with an opportunity using the interactive television program guide to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide.

40. The method defined in claim 34 further comprising identifying which of the program listings contain the potentially objectionable material.

41. The method defined in claim 34 further comprising identifying with the interactive television program guide which of the program listings contain the potentially objectionable material.

42. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program titles, the method further comprising replacing the adult program titles with generic unobjectionable titles using the interactive television program guide.

43. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program descriptions, the method further comprising replacing the adult program descriptions with generic

unobjectionable descriptions using the interactive television program guide.

44. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program titles, the method further comprising replacing the adult program titles by displaying an empty region in place of the adult program titles using the interactive television program guide.

45. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program descriptions, the method further comprising replacing the adult program descriptions by displaying an empty region in place of the adult program descriptions using the interactive television program guide.

46. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program titles, the method further comprising:

identifying which channels the adult program titles are associated with; and

replacing the adult program titles with unobjectionable channel-related information on the channels with which the adult program titles are associated using the interactive television program guide.

47. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising

identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings based on rating information in the program listings.

48. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings based on keyword information in the program listings.

49. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings based on channel information in the program listings.

50. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the program listings are distributed to the user television equipment from a main facility and wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings at the main facility.

51. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising identifying which of the program listings are adult program listings at the user television equipment.

52. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising providing a set-up menu with the interactive television program guide in which the user may invoke adult program listing blocking to block the display of the adult program listings by the interactive television program guide.

53. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to invoke different levels of adult program listing blocking to block different amounts of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide based on ratings information associated with the adult program listings.

54. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the program listings are provided to the user television equipment with a television distribution facility having an operator and wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising providing the operator with an opportunity to block the adult program listings for that operator's customers.

55. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings and wherein the program listings are provided to the user television equipment by a

television distribution facility with which the user television equipment is associated, the television distribution facility having an operator, the method further comprising:

providing the operator with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide for the users of the user television equipment associated with the television distribution equipment; and

distributing complete program listings with the television distribution facility to the user television equipment associated with the television distribution facility when the operator does not invoke blocking.

56. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings and wherein the program listings are provided to the user television equipment by a television distribution facility with which the user television equipment is associated, the television distribution facility having an operator, the method further comprising:

providing the operator with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide for the users of the user television equipment associated with the television distribution equipment; and

distributing program listings with the television distribution facility to the user television

equipment associated with the television distribution facility in which adult program listings have been blocked when the operator invokes blocking.

57. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings and wherein the program listings are provided to the user television equipment by a television distribution facility with which the user television equipment is associated, the television distribution facility having an operator, the method further comprising:

providing the operator with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide for the users of the user television equipment associated with the television distribution equipment; and

sending a blocking command from the television distribution facility to the user television equipment associated with the television distribution facility that directs the user television equipment to block the adult program listings when the operator invokes blocking.

58. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings containing adult time blocks of adult programming, each adult time block being associated with a channel and including multiple adult program titles, the method further comprising replacing the multiple adult titles in each adult time block with an

unobjectionable title for that adult time block using the interactive television program guide.

59. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings including adult program descriptions, the method further comprising controlling access of the user to the adult program descriptions with the interactive television program guide.

60. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings including adult program descriptions, the method further comprising providing the user with an opportunity to access the adult program descriptions by entering a parental control code in the interactive television program guide.

61. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising:

providing an adult programming screen containing adult programming listings; and

blocking access to the adult programming screen with the interactive television program guide when the potentially objectionable material is blocked.

62. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising:

providing an adult programming screen containing adult programming listings;

blocking access to the adult programming screen with the interactive television program guide when the potentially objectionable material is blocked; and

providing access to the blocked adult programming screen with the program guide by providing the user with an opportunity to enter a parental control code.

63. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the interactive television program guide has a set reminders feature and wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising:

providing the user with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide; and

blocking user access to the set reminders feature for adult programs when the user invokes blocking of the adult program listings.

64. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the interactive television program guide has a program recording feature and wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising:

providing the user with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide; and

blocking user access to the program recording feature for adult programs when the user invokes blocking of the adult program listings.

65. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the interactive television program guide has a favorite program profile feature and wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising:

providing the user with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide; and

blocking user access to the favorites profile feature for adult programs and channels when the user invokes blocking of the adult program listings.

66. The method defined in claim 34 wherein the potentially objectionable material comprises adult program listings, the method further comprising:

providing the user with an opportunity to invoke blocking of the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide; and

temporarily unblocking the adult program listings with the interactive television program guide.

67. An interactive television program guide system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented on user television equipment of a user that displays television programming, comprising:

means for providing an opportunity for the user to set up parental control locks for at least some of the television programming using the interactive television program guide; and

means for temporarily disabling the parental control locks.

68. The system defined in claim 67 wherein the user television equipment further comprises a set-top box, the means for temporarily disabling the parental control locks further comprising means for disabling the parental control locks until the set-top box is turned off.

69. The system defined in claim 67 wherein the means for temporarily disabling the parental control locks further comprises means for disabling the parental control locks until the user television equipment has not been used for more than a predetermined amount of time.

70. The system defined in claim 67 wherein the means for temporarily disabling the parental control locks further comprises means for disabling the parental control locks until the user turns on the parental control locks.

71. A method for temporarily disabling parental control locks of television programming in an interactive television program guide system in which an interactive television program guide is implemented on user television equipment of a user that displays the television programming, comprising the steps of:

providing an opportunity for the user to set up parental control locks for at least some of the

television programming using the interactive television program guide; and

temporarily disabling the parental control locks.

72. The method defined in claim 71 wherein the user television equipment further comprises a set-top box, the step of temporarily disabling the parental control locks further comprising the step of disabling the parental control locks until the set-top box is turned off.

73. The method defined in claim 71 wherein the step of temporarily disabling the parental control locks further comprises the step of disabling the parental control locks until the user television equipment has not been used for more than a predetermined amount of time.

74. The method defined in claim 71 wherein the step of temporarily disabling the parental control locks further comprises the step of disabling the parental control locks until the user turns on the parental control locks.